DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 116 231 CS 202 434

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TITLE Captive Voices: Another Look.
INSTITUTION Journalism Education Association, La Crosse, Wis.
PUB DATE Jan 76
NOTE 23p.
AVAILABLE FROM Sister M. Rita Jeanne, Secretary/Treasurer, JEA, Sisters of Perceptual Adoration, St. Rose Convent, La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601 ($2.00 member, $4.00 non-member)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS *Censorship; Financial Needs; *Freedom of Speech; *Journalism; National Surveys; School Publications; School Surveys; Secondary Education; *Student Publications; Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS *Captive Voices

ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the problems faced by the scholastic press, specifically, two of the charges leveled by the Commission of Inquiry into High School Journalism: those of censorship and the low priorities of journalism in the high school, as manifested by inadequate funding and training for advisers, teachers and students. Questionnaires were sent to 175 schools, selected through stratified sampling, with 94 responding. From the information gathered in this survey, it was concluded that the report contained in "Captive Voices" is guilty of sweeping generalizations and over-simplification. Further, there appears to be general agreement on the charge that censorship is widespread, but there is little agreement on other charges lodged in the report. Generally, respondents indicated that journalism in the schools has an equal priority with all areas in the school except sports. A majority of the advisors responding said they were not assigned to the press against their will, although they indicated that they were not well compensated for their time and added responsibilities. (RB)

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Issued January 1976 as part of
the JEA Publications Program

Captive Voices: Another Look

by JOHN BOWEN

INTRODUCTION

High school journalism was given its soundest thrashing ever in a report released in the spring of 1974 by the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial, which had convened a Commission of Inquiry Into High School Journalism.

The report, *Captive Voices: High School Journalism in America*, created a wide and continuing controversy over the status of scholastic journalism among principals, advisers, members of the professional media and members of the country's scholastic press organizations.

The general findings of the report indicate

* Censorship overshadows the achievements and other problems of the high school press and poses its number one problem.[1]
* Minority students are ignored in staff selection, in news coverage and in gaining access to the opinion pages in scholastic media. Minority-school papers have less rights and adviser training than do non-minority.[2]
* School priorities give journalism and journalism education a low place in the school curriculum and activities. Teachers and advisers are not well-trained and are not encouraged to obtain such training. A shortage of funds also characterizes high school journalism.[3]
* Members of the professional media are not aware of the First Amendment rights of student journalists, and do not actively support—or even agree with—the students having these rights.[4]

In trying to sort out all the controversy, the charges of over-generalization and misrepresentation, the author thought the best way would be to conduct a survey that would seek answers either duplicating or rejecting the findings of the Commission. Hopefully, such a survey would also help establish the reality of censorship in the scholastic media, to bring out a general definition of what is censorship, under what conditions should it exist and when and why it had been used.

It is the purpose of this paper to investigate the realities of high school journalism, and specifically, two of the charges leveled by the Commission: those of censorship and the low priorities of journalism in the high school, including inadequate funding and training for advisers, teachers and students.

In particular, this paper will investigate these specific charges of the Commission:

On Censorship –

1. Censorship and the systematic lack of freedom to engage in open, responsible journalism characterize high school journalism. Unconstitutional and arbitrary restraints are so deeply embedded in high school journalism as to overshadow its achievements, as well as its other problems.

2. Censorship of journalism is a matter of school policy—stated or implied—in all areas of the country, although in isolated schools students enjoy a relatively free press.

3. Censorship persists even where litigation or administrative action has destroyed the legal foundation of censorship; such decisions are either ignored or interpreted in such a way as to continue the censorship policy.

4. Although substantive and investigative journalism and controversial or image-damaging information are most severely censored, policies of censorship apply regardless of whether the material is substantive or controversial.

5. Adviser or journalism teachers who in private favor a free student press often succumb to bureaucratic and community pressures to censor the school newspaper.

6. Censorship is generally accepted by students, teachers and administrators as a routine part of the school process. This has developed into the most pervasive kind of censorship, that imposed by students by themselves.

John Bowen is adviser to *The Lakewood High Times* of Lakewood High School, Lakewood, Ohio. He is also a member of the JEA Commission on Freedom of the Scholastic Media.

This publication is a distillation of a thesis which Mr. Bowen recently completed. If a fuller explanation is needed, he may be contacted at Lakewood High School.

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7. Fear of reprisals and unpleasantness, as well as the lack of a tradition of an independent high school press, remain the basic forces behind self-censorship.

8. Self-censorship, the result of years of unconstitutional administrative and faculty censorship, has created passitivity among students and made them cynical about the guarantees of a free press under the First Amendment.

9. Censorship is the fundamental cause of the triviality, innocousness and uniformity that characterizes the high school press. It has created a high school press that in most places is no more than a house organ for the school administration.

10. Where a free, vigorous student press does exist, there is a healthy ferment of ideas and opinions, with no indication of disruption or negative side effects on the educational process of the school.[5]

On Journalism Education

1. The great majority of high school journalism programs investigated by the Commission did not encourage free expression, independent inquiry or investigation on important issues in either the school or community.

2. Generally, the Commission found that the nation's high schools accord journalism education low priority. This is reflected in the elective nature of the courses and assignment of teachers and advisers without special skills in the subject area. Often they are assigned against their will, with relatively little or no compensation for long hours extra work. The problem is that most media-production, for budgetary and scheduling purposes, is considered an extra-curricular activity. In addition, the Commission found that most teachers and advisers had little experience in dealing with First Amendment issues.[6]

This paper is also concerned with the following questions:

* What are adviser, principal and editor reactions to the Commission report?
* Do high school papers mirror administrative attitudes?
* How does the concept of censorship differ between advisers, administrators and editors?
* Does the Commission report reflect the realities of high school journalism?
* What suggestions do advisers, principals and editors have for improvement of the high school press–if any?

METHODOLOGY

Surveys were sent to 175 schools, selected through stratified sampling. Advisers, principals and editors received the survey within each school. Only high school newspapers were surveyed. Some schools were chosen from semester ratings for newspapers of the National Scholastic Press Association and the Columbia Scholastic Press Association. An effort was made to choose an equal amount of papers which had received Medalist, All-American, first, second and third ratings, in order to see if ratings made any difference in censorship policies, and so as to not overload the survey with highly rated papers.

Other schools were chosen randomly from the Directory of Ohio Schools, with an effort to include all areas of the state. Most schools in the metropolitan Cleveland area were included in the mailings. Some schools which had reputations of being censored were included, in an effort to determine factually whether they were or not. More surveys were sent to Ohio schools than out of state. Several private or parochial schools were included in the mailing.

Of the 525 surveys sent, 94 (about 18 per cent) were returned, representing 78 different schools. Responses came from 43 advisers, 29 principals and 22 editors.

In the following sections, representing the findings of the survey, the results are broken down as follows:

Section 1 – responses of editors and pertinent comments
Section 2 – responses of advisers and comments
Section 3 – responses of principals and comments
Section 4 – comparison of responses by group

SECTION 1

Responses of Editors

Survey questions are indicated in italics with the statistical results and then selected comments following.

Are you satisfied with your publication as it stands?

Yes: 7
No: 14

If not satisfied, check any that apply:

3 - paper is too restricted by administrators
0 - paper is too restricted by students
0 - faculty censorship
8 - no news worth covering
10 - failure of faculty, students to give information to the staff
12 - lack of interest by students
9 - inadequate facilities
2 - no journalism courses taught
2 - other (please specify) lack of enthusiasm - 1
don't get to all stories - 1

Comments:

'We are able to print controversial issues without censorship from the administration. The one problem we face is financially; we do not receive as much money as we would like from sources other than advertising.'

'Not enough space or money to provide more space; copy withheld because of space limitations; not a good qualified, dedicated interested staff; no respect of faculty; not a professional atomosphere surrounding the paper–our printer isn't helpful.'

'I wish we could do more in-depth stories and more criticism of the school itself.'

'I am satisfied with our paper because we just changed to a news magazine this year and are real happy with the results.'

'I feel it is a good high school paper, but most of the editors do all the work. Also, we should reach out for freshman and sophomore news more. Thus, due to certain circumstances, we are very unorganized at times which makes it hard to work. We started the year with another adviser/teacher who was very unsatisfactory, and are finishing the year with another adviser who has never worked on a paper before.'

'I'm not satisfied because some of the things that would attract students to buying has to be omitted.'

'No. First, our staff does not feel it is its responsibility to really dig deeper than statements given to us by administrative people. I also do not like the lack of reportorial sources, sources which will give us information the officials will not.'

'We are not allowed to criticize administrative decisions; to mention the use of any sort of drugs, criticize cafeteria food, or criticize coaches or athletic teams. Our proofs are read and censored by the principal before they are shipped to the printers. Our adviser believes in self-administered censorship, but his hands are tied due to administrative pressures.'

Do you feel restricted in publishing controversial material? In what ways and on what topics?

Yes:	8
No:	13
Yes and No:	1

'Topics that the principal disagrees with.'

'Almost anything the least bit controversial, especially critical of the school or faculty policies, are shied away from. The staff is usually afraid of getting on the bad side of the faculty and administration.'

'We ran articles on smoking, smoking lounges, planned parenthood, abortions, the pill (to name a few) and they were as uncontroversial as anything else we'd run. The football sports stories stirred up more comments.'

'In the instance of one story about drinking at a dance, we were threatened with censorship by our principal; it has been hanging over our heads ever since.'

'No restrictions, just to make sure to cover the facts.'

'On topics that would offend conservative parents. Our paper is printed in the middle of the town paper that most residents get.'

'Anything we print that is negative is griped about by the administration.'

'The administration wants the paper to convey the message that everything is running smoothly and without any waves of controversy. The paper is a public relations tool of the administration.'

What items would be considered controversial in your school? Do you feel restricted in publishing these? (answers listed by schools, not summarized)

drugs, flexible scheduling	yes
student columns	no
drugs, alcohol, school rivalries	yes
abortion, pre-marital sex, drugs, homosexuality	no
what the administration and majority of student body disagrees with, 'Where are you Mr. High School Athlete?	yes
sports, students, faculty and school spirit	no
elections, board policy and its effects on students and teachers	no
smoking lounge and study hall - should we have them?, basketball vs. wrestling	yes
smoking, drinking, drugs, pregnancy in high school, destruction of property, cliques, treatment of others	no
against kissing in the halls, textbook controversy	no
prom, certain acts by teachers, administration, student rights	yes
board policies and others	yes and no
specific criticism of individuals and institutions–athletics, administration	yes
criticism of school administration or faculty, criticism of athletics or coaches, drug abuse, alcohol use–any criticism of any event would be controversial	yes
any current/outside school event, criticism of school activities	yes
open lunch, smoking rights, conduct at school activities	yes
attacking athletic programs, faulting student government with inactivity, articles on VD, smoking areas	no

Have any items published in the last year caused controversy?

Yes:	9
No:	4

'An article criticising counselors; an article advocating the rise of girls in athletics.'

'An unsigned editorial criticising the cheerleaders. I knew who wrote it, but we did not print the name in the paper. The administration yelled, but the cheerleaders changed, which means the edit accomplished what it set out to do.'

'Pro-con on open lunches–people did not like the con because it could have jeopardized the chances for open lunches–it didn't.'

'A story and editorial concerning the resignation of the basketball coach. We weren't approached with the opposing side (in letters), but after we printed these we were called 'biased' and 'too far removed from the situation' to understand.'

'There are several. We aim for controversy in editorial positions in order to promote free and independent thinking. In short, we intend to pull no punches. Some items covered include criticism of high school athletics, student organizations and the administration's handling of certain things.'

'Yes. The principal advised us not to print an opinion about an athletic director.'

'Yes. Articles attacking athletic programs, faulting student government with inactivity and others.'

Section 2

Responses of Advisers

Do you receive extra pay for your work as adviser?

Yes: 34
No: 9

Amounts:
$100 - 1
150 - 1
175 - 1
200 - 6
250 - 2
300 - 4
325 - 2
400 - 2
475 - 1
500 - 3
550 - 1
600 - 1
650 - 2
800 - 1
1000 - 1
1100 - 1
confidential - 3

Do you have any released classes or other considerations?

No: 23
Yes:
8 have one class per day for class and paper production
7 have one class released
1 has two classes released
1 has an unspecified amount of released time
1 has no study hall duty as released time

What is your training in journalism?

10 - graduate hours
9 - bachelors
2 - masters
4 - minor
4 - a few courses
2 - fellowships/workshops
2 - bachelors & masters
13 - work experience
4 - undergrad hours

How were you selected to be adviser?

9 - application and interview
9 - appointed
2 - from personal background
19 - went with teaching a journalism course
1 - ?
2 - students asked me
1 - volunteer

Of those advisers appointed, one had only two hours experience, four had six hours training, one had nine hours, one had 'much' and one reported 24 hours training. Another mentioned work experience as qualification.

Of those teaching journalism in Ohio, 11 were certified, 9 were not and seven did not give enough information for a judgment. Of those teaching outside Ohio, nine were certified for their states, two were not and four taught in states that did not have certification requirements.

How would you classify the journalism facilities in your school?

8 - excellent
2 - above average
11 - average or good
6 - fair
3 - bad
7 - inadequate
1 - minimal
2 - none

What other classes do you teach?

30 - English
4 - none
4 - journalism and media
2 - social studies
2 - math
2 - other
1 - band
1 - business

Do your students receive credit for working on the paper? If so, what kind?

Yes: 33
No. 7

Amount:
16 - 1 credit/year
7 - units (not defined)
4 - ½ credit/sem.
2 - ½ credit/year
1 - ¼ credit/semester
1 - ¼ credit/year

If you approve copy in advance, why?

24 - to make it more readable
29 - to correct grammar, spelling
1 - to write headlines
15 - to guard against obscenity
8 - to guard against criticism of administration, faculty, school
27 - to guard against libel
1 - to guard against unfairness, bias
3 - don't

Would you say you have ever censored or been censored?

Yes: 21 (five within court-protected censorship guidelines)
No: 18
Other:
1 - 'advised'
1 - not really
2 - threatened (by principal)

'Yes. By a former principal who wanted nothing negative about the school. Yes, on a matter of taste and once because of an ethnic slur and the editor agreed not to print.'

'Libel. An article condeming a student which had no basis—it was a personality clash between two students.'

'Excessive intimate detail felt to be in bad taste on subject of VD prevention. Several times when article could have maligned a student or teacher.'

'Profanity, inaccuracy and poorly written copy.'

'Mostly on school conditions; a couple of personal remarks.'

'I know what the administration likes; however, our principal gives free reign. If a story is reported on in good journalistic fashion, he has no objections even if he may personally disagree. The central office is a different matter.'

'NO—I work closely with the principal on problem material and we come to a joint agreement.'

'Yes. Parts of editorials done in poor taste—i.e. dress code—rather sarcastic about administration; firing of teachers— comments which could be used in a lawsuit.'

'Nothing major; I censured a feature on snow referring to dogs leaving yellow patches on the snow; I felt it might seem unnecessarily gross to some readers. This happened last December. I had the author re-write the feature.'

Pressure has been applied after the publication of articles. Two items which were libelous were submitted, but the student deleted the material on my advice.'

'Once I did not allow the editorial board to endorse student government candidates.'

'An editorial about the lack of rapport between the football coach and the players. A few features that sacrificed objectivity for opinionated criticism.'

'I cancelled a feature called 'Inside——' made up of humorous references to people and events in the school environment after deciding the certain 'inside jokes' could be personally damaging or insulting to the students, teachers involved and also contained humor that was not of the best taste.'

'Intimidated by the superintendent. I have disallowed work not done by students that our editor wanted to use. I maintain that a student publication must be that—not professionally assisted. The work was art work from a teacher in another school.'

'In April 1975—a sexy joke, too obscene for the school paper. I have been censored by school administrators.'

'Yes on school dress codes and articles degrading the administration.'

'I have been threatened over momentary controversies, but have never really been censored. The current principal actively concerns himself with our content and complains when he's upset. There is a sense of pressure there. Yes, I have stopped obscenity and gossip.'

'I have not been censored. I did censor the paper three times in four years. They were: use of the term 'nigger,' a libelous article accusing a teacher, an incorrect article regarding student rights—the report was simply wrong. As a result, the article would have misled the student body.'

'I have advised occasionally on touchy matters. My advice has been followed.'

'I have guided—not censored.'

'Administration digs.'

'Areas critical of school board policies and administration—on directions of school principal. I must inform you that our school paper ceased publication in June 1973. Student interest had been waning for several years prior to that time. The last issue was published by 10 graduating seniors out of a school of 1,200. In the following school year, with but two students indicating an interest in the publication, I recommended to the school board the suspension of publication until such a time as student interest warranted reinstatement.'

'Yes on both questions—the principal has asked that we not print stories on bomb scares (I guess he thinks the culprit likes publicity). I censor the paper each issue by approving all copy before it is printed, but I rarely have to delete anything.'

'Only twice—four letter words that were not appropriate to the subject; with the consent of the author.'

'I have censored letters to the editor which constituted personal attacks; an anti-God feature column (without point); features or editorials in poor taste (as with bathroom humor); four-letter words and a reference to a teacher as crazed in a letter.

Does the administrator or principal read copy before the paper is issued?

Yes: 4
No: 28
Other: 1 - not always
6 - might ask him to
1 - if there are questionable materials

How many hours do you devote to journalism law, ethics and responsibility with your class and staff?

12 - few
8 - one week or less
1 - three weeks
4 - two weeks
13 - continuous
1 - not applicable

Section 3

Responses of Principals

Have you ever censored copy?

1 - always 4 - seldom
0 - frequently 7 - once or twice
4 - occasionally 11 - never

(Why principals censored copy)

'It was inappropriate, ieud (sic) and derogatory to staff and students.'

'It was embarrasing to individual students.'

'It consisted of untruths and information which might incite problems.'

'The adviser sends students with copy which may be considered controversial, harmful, etc. He seeks my opinion when necessary.'

'It was more a misunderstanding than censorship.'

'Use of obscene words.'

'It was detrimental to the school.'

'The material was unsubstantiated and libelous.'

'It was harmful to a particular individual, student or teacher.'

'The opinions expressed could have been libelous.'

'Negative criticisms of school policy, students or teachers.'

Do you require that copy for the paper be brought to you before it is published?

Yes: 3
No: 18
1 - yes, if questionable

Section 4

Responses of Editors, Advisers and Principals Compared

The following questions were answered by all three groups or two of the three and they are presented together for ease of comparison.

Under what conditions would you believe in censorship?

Principals

9 - material damaging to individual reputations
4 - obscenity
4 - irresponsible journalism
4 - libel
3 - material detrimental to the school
3 - material that would incite riot
2 - poor taste
2 - guidance
1 - each of the following was mentioned:
respectability
responsibility to students
bias against morale of school
filth
an ineffective adviser
common courtesy
offensive
not following pre-rules
questionable material
fear of negative community reaction
when the adviser doesn't censor
no coverage for both sides
inaccuracy
lack of good judgment
unknown conditions to staff
don't

Advisers

15 - obscenity
13 - libel
9 - incite disruption
7 - material damaging to individual
5 - don't
3 - matter of taste
3 - personal attacks
3 - unsubstantiated facts
2 - depends on subject
2 - staff should do censoring
1 - depends on conditions
1 - poor grammar
1 - irresponsible journ.
1 - differing political views
1 - misleading inform.
1 - questionable news interest
1 - when students don't accept responsbility

How would you define censorship?

Advisers

'The arbitrary imposition by authorities of restriction on the freedom of expression.'

'The journalistic approach is based on the laws of libel, and good taste, whereby an article is either rewritten or deleted.'

'Not allowing public release of that which is necessary for the public good.'

'Chopping out anything the administration doesn't like.'

'Editing of inaccurate writing, stories that are poorly written, articles, art and pictures that amliciously attack other races, beliefs and religiouns.'

'The elimination of objectionable materials.'

'Eliminating material that may be controversial and against the policy of the paper.'

'A restraint on freedom of the press when objectionable material could cause problems in the school and community due to inaccurate rumor or possibly libelous information.'

'Common sense and common courtesy.'

'The prevention of the use of material, opinion or information which is outside of the legal concepts of libel—the prevention of the use of material on the basis of differences of opinion, using good objective reporting when it is opinion as a basis for criticizing student material.'

'Preventing the publication of an article or viewpoint by someone other than an editor; an adviser's preventing such publication might be justified; such an action taken by a person not directly involved is outside censorship.'

'Disruption of journalistic procedure for other than journalistic reasons.'

'Suppression of information and accompanying pictures or art—or intimidation of staff so that certain areas are not touched upon.'

'Altering or cutting material offered by reporters or editors.'

'Someone looking ahead to prevent unnecessary problems.'

'Changing or deleting material, other than normal style changes. I suppose one must include insisting students include material they don't want to include.'

'Anyone other than the editor-in-chief making a change in copy other than basic style errors. I believe the adviser should read all copy, ask for corrections, but not make changes himself.'

'An official outside the staff who determines 'acceptable' contents for a publication.'

'Eliminating material for reasons other than being libelous.'

'Pressure to withhold publication of material that gives a negative image to the school. Pressure on the adviser and staff after such publication.'

Principals

'I wouldn't define it in terms of the high school press.'

'The arbitrary removal of material from a newspaper.'

'Preventing publication of an article because I don't like it.'

'Restricting news releases and/or editing them.'

'If the editor does not support the school, its purposes and education—don't print it.'

'Previewing what is to be printed and approving or rejecting items for print.'

'Keeping out what might be libelous or detrimental to the school.'

'An adviser literally removing articles from a rough draft or a final draft whereby proper communication between advisers and students did not occur.'

'Refusing to print copy prepared by students in the school.'

'The word censorship, because of its connotations, cannot be used. The school must, however, provide leadership and direction in journalism that

they do elsewhere. The newspaper copy must be previewed in order to correct inaccurate, libelous and obscene and/or disruptive material before, not after, the harm is done.'

'An oppressive restraint on word and thought.'

'Cut or stop items I consider undesirable.'

'Obscene and libelous material.'

'Only when oscene, libelous and detrimental to other people—not based on fact—in general—poor journalism.'

'Removal of any articles which may be slanderous, libelous or may create any form of unrest within the school or community.'

'Refusing to permit a story or article to appear.'

Editors (included is the response to whether they were censored)

'The inability to print an article of value that the editor deems newsworthy. The censorship is usually doled out by someone because they don't understand the situation. (Not censored.)

'It is the act of hindering in any way the publishing of an article or paper that is controversial, but does not contain libelous material.' (Not censored.)

'The restriction of the publication to print the news objectively and editorialize the views of the staff as they see it. The complete lack of freedom to self-censor.' (Yes to censorship.)

'In my case, censorship is the ability for a higher-up in the scholastic hierarchy to say what can and cannot be printed in our publication.' (Not yet, threatened.)

'Ideal censorship in the high school papers: a power which only I and my editorial staff have control. Real censorship: the withdrawal of our rights as students to print newsworthy material in our student newspaper.' (Not yet censored.)

'Having an article read for approval before publication by the administration.' (Not censored.)

'It is illegal and immoral restrictions placed on any newspaper or other forum offering public information. It is therefore the restriction of not only opinion, but the truth.' (Yes to censorship.)

Have you withheld any copy or pictures from publications?

Principals	Yes: 6 No: 17
Advisers	Yes: 23 No: 15

What were the circumstances?

Principals

- 1 - to make a negative comment positive
- 1 - libelous comments
- 1 - pornography
- 1 - copy was too emotional
- 1 - pro-drug article
- 1 - once when there was a radical paper staff

Advisers' Comments:

'If pictures didn't meet our standards—standards, not censorship.'

'Poorly done copy; copy that was too lengthy; fiction that was not our first priority; non-researched edits.'

'Pictures of students carrying banner calling for firing of football coach.'

'The principal cut out art on petty maintenance problems.'

'An article on teachers' contracts not being renewed; three letters to the editor which called on the administration to give reasons. Because of law, OEA and NEA positions.'

'A picture with obscene gestures.'

'Libelous copy.'

'Use of term nigger, libelous article and an incorrect article.'

What should the role of the high school press be?

Comments by editors:

'To inform students of everything concerning their school, their future, their community.'

'To effectively give insight into school events, happenings, etc. Plus relating 'new' issues concerning the inhabitants of the school and families involved.'

'To report and explain news, entertain students and educate them about upcoming happenings in the school.'

'It should inform and entertain the student body and the faculty-administration.'

'To serve the students in supplying any item that is of educational interest to the students while supplying a forum from which we can be heard.'

'It should be having the experience of writing, reporting and layout techniques. Being able to edit copy and learn the experience of what a newspaper provides for people. A paper should be entertaining and interesting, to draw attention to it.'

'To report the happenings of the high school—good or bad.'

'To inform the students, give recognition to student achievement and to represent the students' opinions.'

'To bring out openly the ideas of students that sometimes they are afraid to bring out.'

'To be the watchdog of student government, the school officials and should be an interpretative paper—because information is already known by rumor—the press has to tell what events mean.'

Comments by principals:

'To present most of the news fairly, clearly and reasonably for students and staff welfare.'

'To learn the newspaper trade.'

'A step toward future and present good journalistic procedures, responsible yet sensible. Sometimes, in spite of the Kennedy Commission report, there is a failure to remember that high school students are just that—high school students. Their level of maturity is not always responsible enough to have what is called a free press.'

'To inform students about school events and activities. To explain misunderstood policies or procedures. To challenge policies or procedures which seem unfair or unnecessary.'

'To promote loyalty to the school.'

'It should be a learning experience for students involved as well as unify the school. It is not yellow journalism.'

'Allow for a variety of opinions on many topics both within the school and within the community. The paper's topics could be political, of community interest and almost on any topic. The articles could vary to appeal for the various interest groups.'

Comment by advisers

'Similar to the public press with the exception that youthful writers need guidance and advice and instruction on press responsibilities and rights.'

'To interpret news by reporting it; to offer a forum for exchange of opinion; to educate the school community.'

'To give journalistic training to students; first to reflect to the community what the school is doing, positively when possible second.'

'A student laboratory for publishing, writing, editing copy, etc.'

'Same as the professional press–and with the added protection of freedom for education, recognizing the need to have the right to make mistakes without undue pressure.'

'One which stimulates thought, provides constructive criticism, and produces pride in the school and students by illustrating the positive side of their lives and talents.'

'To report and interpret school news and community and national news that affects the lives of students. To editorially lead readers to improve their common life at school and outside school.'

'First, a varied educational experience; second, an outlet for student opinion and talent, and third, a chance for students to be involved in the school community. A force in the school community for informing and molding opinion.'

'Provide leadership, offer constructive criticism–to report on all areas that concern the student body.'

'To report, interpret and give opinions on the news–to serve as a watchdog in the microcosm of the school society just as dailies serve as watchdogs in the macrocosm of a democratic society.'

Is there an avenue of student access to the paper for complaints, praise, criticism, etc.?

Advisers: Yes: 40
No: 0

Principals: Yes: 29
No: 0

Editors: Not asked

Do students take advantage of this opportunity?

Advisers: Yes: 22
No: 17

Principals: Yes: 18
No: 11

(A yes indicates constant or continuous use. A no indicates used rarely, little or no use.)

Have you received training in the area of student rights as they pertain to the high school press?

Advisers: Yes: 19
No: 20
Some: 1

Editors: Yes: 9
No: 12

Do you understand the laws concerning the high school press?

Advisers: Yes: 30
No: 9

Editors: Yes: 16
No: 6

Have any of the following topics been withheld from your paper?

topics	Adv.	Pri	Ed.
criticism of administration	10	2	5
criticism of faculty	8	3	5
criticism of student organization	2	1	2
criticism of students	9	6	5
criticism of school policy	2	2	3
criticism of school board	4	1	3
pornography	19	13	5
libel	23	12	9
malicious intent	28	12	5
articles on amnesty	1	0	1
articles on war in Vietnam	1	0	1
critiques of dramatics, shows	1	1	0
criticism of athletics	4	1	2
commentary on the curriculum	0	1	2
articles on drug use	1	4	0
articles on alcohol use	1	1	0
art. critical of community	0	1	2
art. critical of teaching methods	2	1	2
articles on VD	3	0	2
other: student rights	1	0	0
dress code	1	0	0
sex	0	0	1
inaccurate articles	0	1	0
poorly written articles	0	1	0
none	0	7	0

Does the principal/do you? (check any that apply)

question

questions	Adv.	Pri.	Ed.
read any copy before publicat	4	11	4
read editorials before publicat.	5	5	2
read letters before publication	4	3	1
expect copy to be brought to him before approval	1	3	3
withhold any info from paper	10	2	3
have to clear any pictures before publication	1	0	3
prevent reporters from attending meetings	2	0	3
uphold the principles of the First Amendment for high school journalism	28	14	9
give priority to journalism equal to athletics, clubs and other curricula	14	6	5 (no=3)
consider journalism a 'step-child' to English	9	1	6
openly consult with student journalists on school problems	23	15	11

The primary function of a school paper: [8]

(rank order with 1 as the highest)

Advisers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A unifying influence in the school	1	0	6	5	6	9	2	4	0	1
Promote loyalty to the school	0	0	0	3	0	5	3	6	7	3
Accurately report all news–good and bad	29	4	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	0
A matter of record for all school events	1	4	3	4	9	3	5	1	1	1
An entertainment medium	0	1	0	3	4	6	7	4	4	3
Provide leadership in the school	2	7	6	9	2	3	5	2	2	0
Interpret happenings to the school	2	10	11	9	2	0	1	1	1	0
Provide outlet for students and their views	8	12	9	5	5	0	0	1	0	0
Give the students what they want to read	0	0	0	1	1	3	3	7	7	8
Be a public relations medium for the school	0	1	0	1	3	1	5	2	5	11

Principals										
A unifying influence in the school	2	2	4	5	2	3	2	1	0	0
Promote loyalty to the school	0	1	2	4	1	3	1	3	4	1
Accurately report all news–good and bad	13	2	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	0
A matter of record for all school events	1	3	1	1	5	1	3	2	2	1
An entertainment medium	0	0	1	0	1	0	4	1	6	6
Provide leadership in the school	2	0	4	2	7	2	3	1	0	0
Interpret happenings to the school	4	4	4	2	1	1	3	1	0	1
Provide outlet for students and their views	5	6	3	2	1	1	3	1	0	1
Give the students what they want to read	0	0	1	1	0	3	1	3	3	7
Be a public relations medium for the school	0	1	1	4	1	4	2	3	22	2

Editors										
A unifying influence in the school	0	1	2	1	0	3	5	3	4	0
Promote loyalty to the school	0	1	0	4	0	0	1	4	0	9
Accurately report all news–good and bad	15	2	1	0	3	1	0	0	0	0
A matter of record for all school events	0	1	2	5	4	3	1	1	2	1
An entertainment medium	1	2	1	1	2	5	2	2	4	1
Provide leadership in the school	2	1	2	3	4	2	3	1	1	2
Interpret happenings to the school	2	7	2	5	1	1	3	0	1	0
Provide outlet for students and their views	1	4	8	1	4	2	2	0	0	0
Give the students what they want to read	2	1	3	1	0	3	1	6	2	2
Be a public relations medium for the school	0	1	1	1	3	0	2	2	5	4

How is the editorial policy of your paper determined?

	Adviser	Editor
student staff	12	4
students and adviser	28	13
adviser	1	2
principal and adviser	2	1
school board	1	0
no statement	1	9
publications council	0	1

Who has final approval over articles and opinion?

	Adviser	Princi.	Editor
principal	4	2	2
adviser	18	16	10
student staff	14	8	8
students and adviser	7	0	4
adviser and principal	1	0	0
publications council	1	0	0

In your opinion, who should have final control over content of the paper?

	Adviser	Princi.	Editor
princip			
principal	2	10	0
adviser	20	4	0
principal and adviser	0	6	0
student staff	6	1	10
student staff and adviser	13	4	11
taste	1	0	0
superintendent	0	1	0

How would you rank the priority of journalism in your school as compared with:

	higher	equal	lower	non-existant
Editors -				
sports	0	1	16	4
curriculum	0	8	12	1
clubs	8	7	5	1
other activities	0	2	3	2
Advisers -				
sports	15	19	13	3
curriculum	16	16	7	2
clubs	17	20	2	1
other activities	17	15	2	1
Principals -				
sports	2	13	9	0
curriculum	3	15	7	2
clubs	9	18	1	0
other activities	5	16	1	0

Would you agree to this test of whether or not an article should be published?

An article can be published only if:
- *a. it is true*
- *b. it is fair to all concerned*
- *c. it will build good will and better friendships*
- *d. it will be beneficial to all concerned* [9]

Principals: Yes - 14, No - 5

Only in parts:
Yes to a: 2
Yes to b: 2
Yes to c: 0
Yes to d: 1

Advisers: Yes - 5, No - 12

Only in parts:
Yes to a: 24
Yes to b: 18
Yes to c: 0
Yes to d: 3

Editors: Yes - 1, No - 7

Only in parts:
Yes to a: 11
Yes to b: 9
Yes to c: 1
Yes to d: 3

Principals' comments:

'No – it is impossible to please everyone.'

'Terrible question.'

'Minimal.'

'Yes, but statements seem superficial.'

'All articles can't do the above.'

'Should be beneficial to the welfare of the school at all times.'

'Yes, it would then be a constructive paper.'

'It would not work in all cases, and depends on who decides.'

'Yes, why else have a paper?'

'Sensible.'

'This seems fair enough.'

'This would limit the paper to news reporting. We do not preclude editorial comment.'

'This is hard to beat.'

'C and D smack of censorship.'

'Being a Rotarian, I would agree.'

'Yes – but would not have to meet all of the tests.'

'I believe writers must adhere to the truth, but within school avoid individual criticism which could be damaging to the individual.'

'An attempt to set minimum guidelines for responsible journalism.'

Advisers' comments:

'I do not think articles must all be positive. But I would try to avoid those that attempt to alienate, especially on the racial issue.'

'Some of the most significant, useful stories do not build goodwill or friendships or benefit everyone.'

'An article could contain justifiable criticism that would make number c impossible.'

'If a writer has taken into account all sides of a question, has accurately reported and interpreted, and if the article is timely, then it should be printed.'

'Things may be fair and true without building goodwill. Unfortunately, there are bad things in the world and they can't be avoided.'

'If you agreed to this, you may not print only but 'goodie' things.'

'A and B are important to achieve.'

'Yes. I cannot see the point in an article that is true but destructive.'

'No. The top controversial stories of this decade would have never been published.'

'If the press is truly the watchdog for the people, under these four principles it would lose its function. Was the reporting of Watergate beneficial to Nixon?'

'No. Public relations should not be a test of unbiased reporting.'

Editors' comments:

'No to C and D. Sometimes the truth hurts. Papers are not meant to pat-on-the-back everyone concerned. They must get all the facts.'

'No, you can't satisfy all four points in every article. That would eliminate controversy—the most important element found in newswriting.'

'Many articles, if true, will do anything but promote better friendships.'

'If something is fair to all concerned and the students have a right to know about it, it should be run. A paper is not in the business of making friends.'

'Sometimes something needs to be said that will not better friendships, etc. I must agree with *Captive Voices* on this question.'

'B, C and D would eliminate 50 per cent of our stories.'

Would you agree to this test of whether or not an article should be published?

An article can be published only if:

a. it is accurate
b. it is fair.
c. it is in good taste
d. it avoids libel, obscenity 10

Principals:	Yes - 24	**Advisers:** Yes - 30
	No - 0	No - 1
	Only in parts:	Only in parts:
	Yes to a - 1	Yes to a 10
	Yes to b - 1	Yes to b - 8
	Yes to c - 2	Yes to c - 2
	Yes to d - 1	Yes to d - 7

Editors: Yes - 13
No - 1
Only in parts:
Yes to a: 5
Yes to b - 3
Yes to c - 1
Yes to d - 3

Do you agree with the Commission's report?

Advisers:	**Principals:**	**Editors:**
Yes: 9	Yes: 3	Yes: 15
No: 14	No: 15	No: 2
Yes, with reservations: 10	With reservations: 6	With reservations: 2

No answer: 9

Advisers' comments:

'In large part, I agree. I am not in full agreement with the examples of recommended programs and publications. I admire Foxfire, but it does not serve journalism purposes.'

'I have found these problems to be widespread whenever I have talked with other students and advisers. Very few schools enjoy freedom of the press among the ones I have talked with.'

'I agree with much of it, but am not sure the sampling was adequate.'

'No, I am not familiar with nationwide problems of school paper censorship and journalism education, but many of the statements do not apply to our school or many other districts.'

'No—it is full of generalizations.'

'I agree with their findings for the most part. I do not agree with all their recommendations. Student staffs, unfortunately, cannot always make the final decision. They are just learning journalism law and ethics and do not always fully comprehend or practice fairness. Neither do I, but I am a little more mature and a lot more trained than they are.'

'The report is a result of highly limited research and the conclusions seem colored undesirably by the tastes and perceptions of the Commission's members.'

'In some areas, I agree, but it is far too sweeping in its indictments of student press censorship.'

'Not altogether. I do not think the advisers have been given fair representation. The author is evidently speaking from a public school rationale, for private schools operate differently.'

'Yes. I do feel however, that my program provides a great deal of freedom.'

'Yes. It reflects our past history quite well.'

'I do not believe that all 15- and 16-year-old reporters have the maturity or wisdom to make adequate decisions about what should or should not be printed.'

'As long as principals continue to hold a tight rein and as long as advisers are poorly trained, these voices will continue to be captive.'

'They reported nothing that anyone who works in the field did not know, but they assidously avoided consideration of the really good papers and good journalism programs—they decided what they wanted to prove and did it.'

Principals' comments:

'Remember, we are working with young people who are in the first stages of learning this type of thing. They are not trained for the sophistication the report implies.'

Please answer yes or no to the following questions:

Question	Advisers		Principals		Editors	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Is journalism a course offering at your school? One semester, two semesters, three or more	one: 8 two: 16 three plus: 17		one: 8 two: 8 three plus: 8		one: 7 two: 5 three plus: 7	
	42	1	26	3	20	2
Censorship and the systematic lack of freedom to engage in open, responsible journalism characterizes high school journalism.[11]	13	30	1	23	8	12
Censorship of journalism is a matter school policy--stated or implied--in all areas of the country.[12]	19	17	10	12	13	8
Although substantive and investigative journalism and controversial or image-damaging information are the most severely censored, policies of censorship apply regardless of whether the material is substantive or controversial.[13]	19	15	5	16	10	9
Censorship often takes the most pervasive form; self-censorship by students themselves because of fear and lack of a tradition of a high school press.[14]	24	17	14	10	18	4
Censorship is the fundamental cause of the triviality and conformity that characterizes the high school press.[15]	12	27	0	24	14	3
Are journalism rights--along with responsibilities taught?	32	8	22	3	13	9
Should full First Amendment rights extend to the high school press?	31	9	12	12	22	1
Should schools offer credit for publications work?	40	1	24	1	19	2
Are you aware of recent cases affecting high school journalism on state and national levels?	37	5	20	5	14	8
Should the school administration have the final say in all cases of censorship and all articles because they pay the paper's bills and the salary of the adviser?	4	36	8	14	3	17
Should the paper be a house organ reporting only what gives the school a favorable image?	1	41	1	25	0	22
Good journalism teaching and advising requires letting the students make the ultimate decisions on school paper content, based on the teaching of ethics and responsibility.[16]	36	6	15	10	22	0

	Advisers		Principals		Editors	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
Most stories in high school papers are inaccurate or biased.	3	39	4	22	4	18
The cost of high school publications is excessive compared to the value the school receives in good public relations.	10	30	7	19	5	15
A journalism course is a good place for high school students who would have a difficult time passing the regular English program.	1	39	1	26	1	20
The school paper should be considered an activity and not an academic subject.	3	32	6	16	1	21
There is no need for separate courses in journalism at the high school level since adequate training can be given in a journalism unit in any English course.	1	39	0	27	0	22
Journalism cannot be taught in a classroom; it must be learned through experience.	Both: 11 7	22	1	21	Both: 7 5	8
School papers should have strict administrative controls on them.	2	37	4	22	0	22
The risk taken if a few abuse their First Amendment rights is outweighed by the far greater risk run by suppressing free speech and press among the young.[17]	29	10	11	12	18	0
Censorship is the wrong word to use with regard to limitations on expression imposed by adviser, faculty or administrator. Censorship becomes a fact only when restriction is imposed from outside the paper's ownership.[18]	8	28	18	7	4	16
It is in the public interest for school papers to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those which are unorthodox and unpopular with the majority.[19]	34	4	13	12	20	0
Students on a publication staff can be disciplined or suspended because of their activities in staff activities disapproved by the school administration.[20]	6	30	3	18	not asked	
The newspaper adviser should be removed if paper content runs contrary to that wich the majority of the school wants to see.	4	30	9	17	3	16
Are you familiar with the findings of the Robert F. Kennedy Commission report on high school journalism called *Captive Voices?*	31	7	13	12	10	11

'I still think that they are forgetting that it is a learning situation. Journalists who write for a living don't have this kind of First Amendment rights. If a publisher of a local newspaper doesn't want a liberal viewpoint in his paper, he just throws it out.'

'I agree with some findings, but not with the recommendations in general. These are made by people who are not held responsible for student behavior. As long as the public holds the administration and faculty adviser responsible for what is printed, then they would irresponsible to give total control to students. Students cannot be held responsible and no individual should be given final authority for something which they are not held accountable.'

'Sounds like a bunch of radicals

'Yes in principle. No in practice. We have had experience with our community. Parents object to extremism.'

'I testified before the Commission and told them that at that time they were biased, had closed minds, already knew what they wanted to find and were just looking for evidence.'

'I do not favor total independence of a school paper because of the maturity level of student staff members: 1) they cannot be accorded an equal basis with newspapers, and 2) they deal with a more limited client, 3) there is more to journalism than exposing something and 4) an individual can be hurt easier than the reading public.'

'I agree based on 18 years exposure to high school journalism.'

Editors' comments:

'Yes. I think that high school journalism should be 'real' to provide experience and responsibilities.'

'I do agree with it in most respects, but it appears a bit exaggerated when it discusses how widespread censorship is in the high school press, because looking at some exchange papers, it looks as if some controversial topics have been heavily covered.'

'Yes and no. Some of the examples that were cited were totally irrelevant and probably only happened at that school—yet I agree with the findings, with the exception of number five concerning censorship.'

'No. Our school does not have any censorship per se, for we usually do not write anything controversial.'

'I agree that school publications are censored. At our school it is not so much by the administration not allowing certain stuff to be printed, but the reporters avoid, either consciously or unconsciously, any subject that may be even remotely considered controversial. We live in a very conservative small town.'

'I do not agree with all of the Commission's 'findings.' For instance, if our paper was as 'vigorous' as it should be, there would be many negative side-effects. However, I agree with the rest, except that censorship is not necessarily part of the school policy.'

'Yes, I do. As far as I can tell from my experience, the school newspaper is given little attention except when it criticizes the system.'

'In general, I believe the Commission is on the right track in its approach to the problem. Journalism is a very important and integral facet of my life, but I somehow wonder if the Commission is taking a too almighty stance in investigating the problem. They must remember that it has a place, it is a cog in the whole educational system. It must not become more important than fundamentals—say of English. When that happens, the whole thing breaks down and education itself becomes a waste.'

'I agree with the Commission's report—many schools are pressured into not printing things.'

'Yes, because I have observed the principal—even though he is freedom-of-the-press conscious, still advocate adviser controls. And, students in general, even bright, intelligent, mature students, considered incompetent in every endeavor they participate in, including newspapers.'

Can you cite evidence that the report is factual or not?

Editors' comments:

'In Texas last year, most papers I saw were 'run-of-the-mill.'

'Personally, I could support the Commission's findings on self-censorship. I have changed a few of my articles because I was afraid of making anyone angry.'

'We often self-censor our paper because we know approximately what we can get away with.'

'Most of the statements seem to apply to our situation.'

Principals' comments:

'No doubt facts are true. However, the Commission members were never high school principals who had to live with all publics.'

'Generalizations are always open to question.'

Advisers' comments:

'Freedom of the press is an issue each time our paper appears. Students, the adviser and the administration are beginning to tire of the tense situation.'

'I have heard advisers discuss the same problem for 15 years at meetings. Those who haven't had the problem can't seem to recognize its existence—but it is there. It is so overwhelming that more will have to be done regularly to make any changes.'

'Specific cases of censorship do not exist in Northeastern Ohio.'

'Having just judged 175 entries from 40 high schools in an editorial contest, I am appalled at the poor quality of the writing, the lack of research, the innocuousness of the subject matter.'

'I have frequently talked with other advisers who feel this is a factual report.'

Can you cite personal evidence that supports or rejects the commission's report?

Principals' comments:

'Our school paper often has things in it that I personally don't like. But, I only object to things that I feel would cause problems.'

'Yes. Conservative communities want school papers to reflect moderate views. Wild, irresponsible material offends these parents.'

'Generally, I would say the picture is not as dark and oppressive as they indicate.'

Editors' comments:

'Many schools in Texas.'

At ——— High School in ————. Three students said 'anything we print has to be sugary sweet.'

———, ——— a 'free press' high school paper was outlawed by the school system's board of trustees. At ——— High School, the principal censors.'

Advisers' comments:

'I haven't time to research everything.'

'It applies to my own situation.'

'Students are afraid to sign their names to articles and editorials critical of the administration.'

'Your questions do not deal with self-censorship and how it works—since the RFK report, I have had the experience of working with students who are so ingrained with reasons why they 'censor' themselves that they illustrate the report's findings in every way.'

'Others have told me they must submit all copy to the principal before publication.'

'Sometimes it's toe the line or lose the contest.'

'When I testified before the Commission, I had a prepared speech. I wish I had kept it. The Commission seemed concerned that I had only one minority student on my staff. At that time ———had three Negroes and about 30 Latin Americans. I don't think they had any idea what ——— is like nor the area I teach and I don't think they tried. I feel they heard only one side of the ———issue. Things seemed so terribly stacked.

'I wish I could remember everything that went on, but it happened two years ago. ———also testified. I don't believe he was quoted accurately either.

I have not read all the report. I have been very skeptical about it.'

Please react to the following definition of censorship. Would you accept it? Would your principal accept it? How would you change it?

Censorship is any stoppage of material that would go beyond the following limits:

- *material must be accurate*
- *material cannot be libelous*
- *material must not be obscene*
- *material must not cause material disruption of the school process*

Censorship would thus also include any limiting of access to information in the school, refusal to communicate because the story 'won't make the school look good,' threatening the job of an adviser if something is printed, working conditions that are below the level of minimum adequacy (including lack of adequate funding and time for student work), and lack of an adequate training atomosphere, specifically lack of a journalism class and qualified adviser and instructor (one with journalism training and experience.).

Principals:
Yes: 13
No: 4
Yes, only to first four items: 5

Editors
Yes: 17 †
No: 1
† 2 except for material disruption
2 except for 'thus includes' part

Advisers
Yes: 17
No: 1
Blank: 8
Yes, if include 'material damaging to individuals:' 1
No opinion: 1
Yes, without 'thus includes' part: 12
Yes, to only the following:
accuracy - 3
libel - 3
obscenity - 2
mat. dis. - 1

Advisers. comments:

'Yes - and I know of instances when qualified instructors were removed by administrators who wanted to control school publications.'

'I would go along with this and I think my principal would. The question would arise from who would decide material disruption.'

'I would accept your definition. I think it is very explicit in its wording. My principal would probably agree with it, but would probably consider it necessary to censor things once in a while.'

'This seems to be a pragmatic, realistic definition of a given, present situation.'

'I would be tempted to drop the last qualification. The school process, I would assume, refers to the education process, and since one can learn something from nearly any situation, I'm not sure that the process have never been disrupted.'

'Many of these do not consider a school's financial situation. Some simply could not afford some of this and yet have no intention of censorship.'

'I live with this (lack of funding). But otherwise I'm spoiled by appreciation which came *after* our success was established! I would return to teaching English rather than fight any of the other problems listed.'

'All acceptable material must not cause material disruption.'

'My principal, board of education and I agree on these First Amendment guarantees. None of us has ever tried to go beyond this.'

'I would accept it, but I'm not sure of my principal. Sometimes I wonder just where he stands.'

Principals' comments:

'I would include much more in this definition. I would not talk of censorship at all—I would talk about the training of *young* people in the use of the media of youth.'

'I would not approve. We have had student 'reporters' who tried to get other persons by writing truthful accounts of happenings which were repugnant—as 'doesn't wash his hands after taking a crap,' 'picks his nose and eats it,' 'plays with himself,' etc.

'The administration has worked within so a wholesome sphere for many years at this school.'

'What is adequate training? Where does the money come from? If the board of education objects, of course a wise adviser - not on tenure - would take note. To do otherwise is simply folly. Is the student editor really responsible? Who is sued? A 17-year-old girl? The principal, superintendent and board get the lawsuits.'

'No problem except the underlined statement (any limiting of access to information). A variety of regulations limit access to certain data. I am a firm believer that 'rights and privileges' must be matched in equal amount of responsibility and mature judgement. The recommendations summarized in your information on *Captive Voices* are a little far out to me.'

'I disagree with the above definition. I do not believe it gets at the real issue of censorship. There is some school information which is privileged, for example. This is a complex issue that cannot be simplified. Even the Supreme Court has difficulty in defining what is obscene. Court cases are inconsistent as to what constitutes libelous material.'

Editors' comments:

'It's fully accurate! I'd accept it as well as anyone. I wouldn't change it, just try to stop it.'

'I accept it because the school paper is reflecting the school, students and faculty. A paper can be accurate and I believe should be because an accurate paper is noted correctly and people could respect it more and more.'

'The principal tends to feel we should not print anything which makes the school look bad. I feel that if it's the truth, it can be printed.'

'I agree with this- these are the state standards. Only question is what can be considered school disruption?

'I would accept it. The principal would not. He thinks the paper should be used to make us 'one happy family.''

'Censorship in our school seems to deal most with disruption of the school process. Our principal is very conscious of community opinion and keeping controversy out of the public eye. Job protection is a major factor both to the principal and our adviser. We do self-censor to avoid conflict and we have not revolted against censorship. We are passive.'

Any other comments or points you would make about either the topic of censorship in general, or this survey in particular?

Editors' comments:

'I think censorship is usually due to a communications gap between the staff and censor.'

'Journalism as taught in high school is not constructive due to inefficient methods and lack of student interest.'

'I don't feel we have a problem of censorship because we have a qualified adviser who will fight the administration for our rights. Our problems stem from personal biases of the adviser towards the staff members and an inadequate printer. Lack of respect for us stems from lack of detailed coverage, which stems from staff members not completing their jobs to the full extent. Their lack of enthusiasm is why.'

'Scholastic journalism could be a lot better if students had more time to devote to it, and more financial support.'

'In this town, the town newspaper calls the principal on any school matter. If there is a letter to the editor concerning a school issue, his reply appears with it. We recently had some controversy over a 'letter.' The principal felt his reply should have gone in with the letter. We feel he should have his chance when the paper becomes public. The matter concerned the principal searching a student's car. The principal censored a few parts of my article on VD and made me re-write parts of it. He will not let us print an article about a senior class trip to ————"

'Much of our work is self-cenosred—we're not actually sure of what we can or cannot print. In our school, letters to the editor criticizing school policy are rare because that students are afraid of a permanent blacklisting from a sensitive or resentful faculty member. I also feel that self-imposed censorship might decrease if students knew more of the rights and responsibilities of the high school press.'

Principals' comments

'I have stopped at this point. My patience is exhausted on what I deem a very poor questionnaire and I would be happy if you told your adviser.'

'Your questionnaire is an imposition on one's time.'

'The questionnaire is too long and involved. The implication is that the news staff and adviser are being beaten into submission. I think your energies could be spent better.'

'I can have useful input. I am ultimately responsible. I take lots of guff and I believe I deserve to have the first copy.'

'I believe in censorship when material would cause a negative reaction by the community in general or problems in the functioning of the school.'

Advisers' comments

'Please give attention to the importance of a qualified able press in school situations as an educating experience to the total school community and the responsibility of the school districts in providing qualified journalism teachers and the financial support a good journalism program requires.'

'If I were publishing or editing a paper and my editorial writer persisted in presenting his political views to the exclusion of my own, when I pay the bills I have the last say, would be my philosophy.'

'Each adviser should settle censorship his best way.'

'I was recently rather summarily removed from my advisership after a couple of crises—one involving a story—true—about school maintenance—and one (personal remarks about the superintendent's son which I had no defense for). I did not fight because at the time I felt the problem was one my administrator had, not me. (I am retained as technical adviser as my successor has had no journalism experience; she is editorial adviser). Now I'm sorry I did not put up a fight—but I may sould off when school ends. We (the administration and I) are considering developing a publications production course for credit to legitimize control.'

'Last year a 'moon shot' was published; also a shot of a streaker. The adviser was severely criticized and the new adviser told it *must* not happen again.'

'I have been threatened, yelled at and once actually told to censor by two principals. Our most recent principal often asks about what is going in the paper and called me in when he was displeased. He has once asked me to see a photo before printing. He preaches freedom of the press, but says accentuate the positive. Maybe I'm paranoid, but I think that's implied censorship. In general, articles that seem controversial to me have caused no problems. For example, an article pointing out structural problems in the building and inconsistancies in administration, received much (well-deserved) praise. But an article quoting the janitor as saying the toilets were a mess brought the wrath of the principal (a nice reasonable seeming fellow who was being pressured from above). Also a dumb Christmas feature about the elves getting drunk at an office party won me a trip to the principal's office.'

'Censorship is *not* the major problem of the high school press. I feel some advisers use this dodge as an excuse for not being actively involved in the publication that are paid to advise. I feel strongly that I am employed to *teach* my students and to provide active leadership and support for them. I find it impossible to believe that in this day and age of student rights in *all* areas, administrators would deliberately try to stifle First Amendment freedoms.'

'The newspaper adviser is a lonely teacher. He can't always agree with the students, especially if your item 65 items are violated. He will always antagonize faculty (not publishing someone's news, criticism, etc.). He must learn to accept all this criticism. I've found the criticism from faculty to be the hardest to take. Faculty members say 'how could you let them say that?' Yet, they claim to teach freedom of the press in American history.'

'I became tired of having to explain the supposed 'liberal' attitudes of some of our articles, so I dumped the question of censorship into the hands of the principal.'

'The majority of your questions seem biased and pointed. Obviously, you are baiting the person who is answering them. I don't think censorship on a high school publication is as bad as the survey makes it appear.'

'Both the principal and I read all copy before it is published. I read it and comment on it as a journalism teaching tool. He reads it as a censor.'

'As the report suggests, I would like to be more of an adviser than a copyreader—but in eight years in this post, I've found only one student who could spell. Misspellings and mechanical error in a student newspaper are as bothersome (and damaging) as in a metropolitan daily. An adviser should correct them if the students don't recognize them as inaccuracies.'

'Since the administration can threaten to take away my job (and they have), I feel that I must exercise a certain amount of control. I have to admit that some students would take advantage of the power of the press to publish their personal gripes against others if I did not say anything to them about it. I do feel that the responsible students should be able to exercise final control.'

CONCLUSIONS

1. From the information gathered in this survey, it seems obvious that the report of the Robert F. Kennedy Commission's *Captive Voices*, is guilty of sweeping generalizations and over-simplification. However, some specific charges were seemingly upheld, while in some cases there is not enough conclusive evidence. There is valid evidence to indicate that censorship is unreasonable in enough cases to make it a problem worth further investigation.

2. Specifically, there seems to be general agreement only on the Commission charge that 'censorship often takes the most pervasive form: self-censorship by students themselves because of fear and lack of a tradition of a high school press.' Comments from editors, advisers and principals seem to reinforce this point. On other specific Commission charges, there is no strong agreement. There also seems to be support that 'censorship and the systematic lack of freedom to engage in open, responsible journalism characterize high schoo school journalism' is not true to the degree indicated by the Commission. Evidence reported seems to show that a substantial number of papers are free to comment on 'controversial' topics, although there is no real agreement on what is, or is not, controversial. However, as the survey indicates, there are schools with real censorship problems, self-imposed by students and directly imposed by administrators or advisers.

3. Generally, respondents indicated that journalism in the schools has an equal priority with all areas in the school except sports. Editors, however, stated that journalism had a lower priority in all areas with the exception of clubs. Advisors claimed in about half the cases that journalism had higher priority than any of the other activities. Only in a clear minority of instances was journalism priority non-existant in the schools.

4. A majority of the advisers said they were not assigned against their will, but sought the position, contrary to Commission statements that indicated in other surveys that 'only 32 per cent . . . had requested their assignments.'[21] Slightly more than half of the advisers (24) met the certification requirements of their states. This would tend to reinforce the Commission's point that many advisers across the nation do not have adequate backgrounds in journalism. Moreover, some form of censorship tended to exist where the adviser did not meet certification requirements.

5. Although the advisers report monetary compensation ranging from $100 per year to $1,100 per year, 54 per cent report

having no released classes or other compensation. In some cases where the adviser reported released time, the 'released time' was actually a production class producing the newspaper. This seems to correlate with Commission findings that advisers do not receive adequate compensation for 'long hours of extra work.'[22]

6. A majority of editors responding indicated they were not satisfied with their publication, but for many other reasons than strictly censorship. Many cited lack of student interest and failure of faculty and students to give information for articles to the staff. Others cited inadequate facilities. About half of the advisers also complained of inadequate facilities.

7. In the same area, many editors felt restricted in publishing controversial materials. The comments indicate in what ways and on what subjects. These seem generally to support the Commission conclusion of self-censorship and passivity. Controversial topics range from critical articles on athletics to any current, outside-the-school event or story or editorial critical of school policy. Some controversial articles did cause reprisals and unpleasantness. Again, the responses seem to indicate support for the Commission argument that there is much reason for fear of reprisal and willingness to self-censor.

8. Students, advisers and principals strongly reject the idea that the high school paper is merely a house organ for the administration. Some cases do indicate this practice, but it seems not widely spread. This was one of the Commission's main charges.[23]

9. Advisers were evenly split in answering the question if they had ever censored or been censored. Important here is the great diversity of exactly what constitutes censorship and even if the term censorship should apply to the high school press. Also important is the disagreement on what areas it should apply.

10. Although not to the degree mentioned in the Commission's report, some censorship conditions, practiced by principals, bounded on the unreasonable. In comparing how advisers and principals view censorship, the advisers had a more legalistic idea of what censorship was, one that had been court supported. Libel and obscenity were the highest areas of censorship, but principals also said with about the same intensity that 'material detrimental to the school' and 'guidance' would be censored.

11. Contrary to suggestions in the Commission's report, most principals who responded do not read or censor papers before publication, according to their statements and those of editors and advisers. Reasons for censoring are varied, and in some cases support Commission charges of unreasonable restrictions. Implicit in both advisers' and principals' answers is that under some conditions the adviser is expected, required or voluntarily chooses to take 'questionable' copy to the principal for prior approval. Such conditions were not explained or illustrated further.

12. Definitions of censorship varied widely. A common definition is needed that could be accepted by all. This may be impossible, however, since some principals feel that censorship is an inappropriate term, and that leadership, guidance and direction – some such term – should instead be used. One-third of the editors said they were censored according to their own definition. Several others reported being threatened with censorship.

13. In papers that seem to indicate censorship, letters to the editor columns or space is seldom if ever used, in the words of one adviser because of 'fear of reprisal from the principal.' In other papers, there is widespread use of this forum. In every instance, the author would call censored, there is little or no use of this space. Admittedly, reasons could be varied and might not indicate 100 per cent censorship in all cases. However, comments from editors in cross-checking adviser and principal comments and comments from advisers seem to indicate a correlation in this area.

14. Topics most heavily withheld from the paper, as reported by all respondents, are libel, pornography, attacks on individuals and articles that show malicious intent. Topics the Commission would consider 'substantive and investigative' or image-damaging' were also withheld, the heaviest being criticism of the administration, criticism of athletics and articles or editorials on drug use. The frequency of withholding in each of these areas did not support Commission charges of the widespread restriction of such topics.

15. Most respondents indicate that the principals uphold the First Amendment rights of student journalists. However, in another question, principals themselves are split on whether students should have **full** First Amendment rights. In this second question, advisers and editors strongly support full rights. This is perhaps an indication of an undercurrent throughout the survey that in principle such rights are defended, while in practice, they are not.

16. Advisers, editors and principals feel they are aware of recent court cases, yet half of the principals still feel full First Amendment rights should not apply to the high school press. This would tend to rein-

force the Commission's concept of censorship being a part of the school policy, and in some cases, in disregard of court decisions.

17. All three groups strongly feel that schools should offer credit for publication work. They also fee the school paper should be an academic area and not just an activity. They also strongly feel there is a need for separate courses in journalism and that those having a hard time in English should not be placed in a journalism program, a point, according to Bill Ward, supported in the Commission report.[24] These responses would seemingly indicate a committment by most advisers, principals and editors for a strong journalism program, something the Commission says is not evident in most cases.

18. However, in practice, reality may be different than ideals. Advisers and editors strongly agreed that it is better to risk a few abusing their First Amendment rights than to suppress free speech and press among the young. Principals disagreed. Advisers and editors strongly agreed that censorship was indeed the right word for internal limitations imposed by adviser, faculty or administration. The principals strongly disagreed, 18-7. Advisers and editors strongly agreed that the best interests of the school was to make the widest diversity of opinion available. Principals split 13-12 in favor. Advisers and editors strongly agreed that good journalism teaching and advising requires letting students ultimately make the final decisions over content of the paper based on good teaching of ethics and responsibility. Again the principals split, this time in favor 15-10. These responses do in fact give the Commission's argument strength that censorship does in fact exist. Again, it does not exist to the overwhelming extent the Commission suggests but it is there and working. Answers to the last point of ultimate control seemingly contradict the next point. It's the wavering between reality and theory that causes much of the unreasonable censorship shown in this survey and in the Commission's report.

19. In each group, the concensus seems to be that the ultimate authority for content of the paper be left in the hands of the students alone (this seemingly contradicts the above conclusion). Principals feel strongly that they should keep the ultimate control; advisers feel they should, although many would share this with the staff and the editors feel they should share this duty with the adviser (although almost half feel they should should have final control). All three—advisers and students more strongly—feel the adviser should retain control in the decisions regarding content, although it should be of an instructional nature, definitely not that of a censor.

20. All three groups strongly agree that papers should not have strong administrative controls on them. This ideal is seemingly contradicted by the realities of many school situations. Only four principals said papers should have strong administrative controls on them while several others through the rest of their responses indicate they believe papers should be controlled.

21. Editors were the only group that strongly agreed with the totality of the Commission's report. Principals were the most negative, while advisers accepted it for the most part, but with many reservations. Comments on this question are mot enlightening. Most of the respondents already knew of the report. Only editors agree with the Commission that censorship is the fundamental cause of the triviality and uniformity of the high school press. Principals totally reject this idea.

22. All groups agree that journalism rights are taught along with responsibilities in the schools. However, students are the most evenly split. In a reference question, only 9 of 21 editors said they had received training in how First Amendment rights pertain to scholastic journalism. Only 19 of 40 advisers answered the same way. Both advisers and editors said they understood the laws concerning the high school press. This is a discrepancy in the answers and could reinforce the Commission's argument that lack of knowledge about First Amendment rights is a major reason for self-censorship, and for the continuation of unreasonable censorship.

23. All three groups feel the main function of a high school paper is to report all the news accurately, whether that news be good or bad. Principals also rank the unifying function highly, a function which is not always in harmony with journalistic purposes. They place entertainment and giving the students what they want last. To promote loyalty is low to all three groups, while to provide leadership in the school falls surprisingly into the middle of all three groups. Public relations is of middle importance only to principals, and of little importance to the other two groups. This low rating of public relations is often contradicted by comments on what is censored and why by principals and advisers in other sections of the survey.

24. In conjunction with the unifying function mentioned above, the principals are the only group to support the controversial 'Rotary Rule' in judging what would go into the paper. Comments quite adequately point out adviser and editor feeling that building goodwill and being beneficial could be disastrous to the concept of a free press. All three groups would agree to Don Nicholson's alternative to the Rotary Rule as a guideline. Questions were raised, however, as to the definition of good taste and who would decide it.

25. A strong definition of censorship is needed. Definitions varied widely, many being entirely arbitrary and unreasonable. Common gounds and causes of censorship need to be made and agreed to by all parties.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Much more intense study must be made in the area of scholastic press freedom, education and funding. *Captive Voices* and this survey only have value as beginnings. Many questions still need to be more fully answered. Much unreasonable censorship still exists.

2. To correct the problem of unreasonable censorship, scholastic press organizations should accept a common definition and begin to motivate school systems across the country to agree with that definition. Ways to do this would be through intensive workshops for advisers, editors and staffs, and principals. Workshops could be on the local, regional and state levels. University, college and professional media people should be involved in the defining and discussion phases. The definition itself could be similar to the one suggested in this survey, and based on current court opinions as to what is valid censorship. Quite probably censorable material would then include only: (a) libelous material, (2) material likely to cause immediate and substantial disruption of the school, and (3) obscene materials. To be effective, libel, obscenity and material disruption would have to be carefully defined and limited. Good points for beginning would be the legal guide presented in *Captive Voices* and numerous current legal guides. Contacts could also be made with local legal organizations and bar associations.

3. To make such a definition effective, all scholastic press organizations should develop a strong program of determining where censorship exists and attempting to correct the situations that cause it. In short, these organizations should be a strong policing arm to protect student rights (and those of a complete education and educational process). Another step would be to establish a committee to hear cases of censorship and other problems of editors, advisers and principals. It is imperative that all sides of any issue be heard. Such committee or group would function year 'round, and hopefully aided with funds so that it might carry out any recommended actions or investigations.

4. Schools of Journalism should continue to work closely—or begin to—with the state departments of education in determining strong standards for high school journalism advisers and instructors. A beginning step would be to insist that each teacher and adviser of journalism have at least a minor in journalism, or comparable amount of practical news-editorial journalism experience. A second step would be to work toward an understanding with school systems that teachers not be 'appointed' to be teachers and advisers of journalism against their will, and without a proper background.

5. In all ways possible, school systems should ensure adequate financial support for school publications. Minimums might be a bi-weekly paper with adequate funding for equipment and released time/extra compensation for the adviser. In publishing a paper less often than bi-weekly, the students are not adequately learning adequate journalism skills and practices. Total dependence on advertising or making the staff sell cookies or hold car washes every weekend in order to have a paper is blatantly avoiding the main purpose of a paper. It is also discriminatory against the paper, as other organizations, such as athletics, probably do not have to go through the same process to make money.

6. Administrators and teachers should realize that a student publication is a place for learning the principles of journalism. It is a learning laboratory where they might make mistakes—but they will also learn from them. And if they are learning, through professional instruction and use of full First Amendment rights (the responsibilities come with proper education in the rights), they will stop making mistakes and act responsibly and maturely. The idea that once the students are given full First Amendment rights, they will immediately cut down everything in sight is unrealistic, and bluntly neglects the importance of the learning situation as presented by a trained adviser who respects the students as young adults and human beings. In such cases, the students will work freely in a framework of professionalism, fairness, accuracy and responsibility because they fully understand the rights inherent in the First Amendment.

7. Credit should be offered for work on scholastic publications. Most of the respondents feel credit should be offered, because work for the paper is not extra-curricular, it is academic and involves practical application of theories and ideals learned in many different classrooms.

8. Laws of libel, ethics and student rights as they pertain to the scholastic press must be made parts of all journalism and mass communications curricula. The survey showed too many students did not know or understand their rights—and thus their responsibilities. An adequate amount of time should be devoted to the study and practical application of these all-important items.

9. School systems—and scholastic press organizations—should insist on a written, concisely prepared statement of guidelines and

purpose and most importantly the role of the high school press. Such a statement should clearly outline the responsibilities of the principal, the adviser and the rights and responsibilities of the student staff. It should clearly state what censorship is and is not, and that the paper is a learning laboratory, not a house organ. It must be jointly agreed upon by all parties—students, principal, and adviser. Ideally, it would also be published and available for the faculty, student body and community.

10. Steps should immediately be taken to begin to eliminate the concept of self-censorship that many student staffs hold. Main implementors of such a program should be the local, regional and state scholastic journalism organizations, through the use of intensive, free and well-publicized workshops presented by advisers or professional media personnel trained in dealing with this problem.

11. In initiating such a program to deal with the roots of censorship, the local, state and regional scholastic press organizations could identify those school systems that practice censorship. At this point beginning steps could be taken to change the situation causing the problem. One way to deal with this would be trhough an effective program aimed at educating the public about the role and educational nature of scholastic journalism and its purposes.

12. To complete sound journalism teaching, advisers should let students make the final decisions in content, editorial stance and make-up, based on sound and professional instruction. The adviser is there to advise, to trust and be a good example of professionalism.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Jack Nelson, prepared for the Commission of Inquiry Into High School Journalism of the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial, *Captive Voices*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1974) pp.3-47.

[2]Ibid., pp. 53-77.

[3]Ibid., pp. 81-111.

[4]Ibid., pp. 117-136.

[5]Ibid., pp. 47-49.

[6]Ibid., pp. 111-113.

[7]John Windhauser and J. W. Click list the certification requirements of all 50 states in 'Will the Real Journalism Teacher Please Stand Up,' in *Communication: Journalism Education Today* (Fall 1971) pp. 6-7.

[8]The questions are based on a chapter in Bill Ward's *Newspapering*, 'Purpose—Forming the Image of Your Newspaper for Better and Not for Worse.' National Scholastic Press Association, University of Minnesota, 1971, pp. 52-55.

[9]Nelson, *Captive*, pp. 19-20. This is the controversial 'Rotary Test' explained fully on these pages in *Captive Voices*.

[10]Ibid., p. 22.

[11]Ibid., p. 47.

[12]Ibid., p. 47.

[13]Ibid., p. 48.

[14]Ibid., p. 48.

[15]Ibid., p. 48.

[16]James W. Garrick, adviser to the *Sword and Shield*, school newspaper of Keenan High School, Columbia, South Carolina, made this comment to the RFK Commission as reported in *Captive Voices*, p. 83.

[17]Eisner v. Stamford Board of Education, 440 F. 2d 803 (2nd Cir. 1971), as reported in *Captive Voices*, p. 47. The question is verbatim from the court decision.

[18]Laurence R. Campbell, 'Newspaper advisers and Freedom of the Press: An Exploratory Inquiry by Quill and Scroll Studies,: mimeographed, 1974. The question was based on a similar one in this survey, p. 18.

[19]Ibid., p. 18.

[20]Ibid., p. 22.

[21] Nelson, Op. Cit., p. 89.

[22] Ibid., p. 111.

[23] Ibid., p. 48.

[24] Ibid., p.

[24] Bill Ward, 'Reading Between the Lines,' *Scholastic Editor Graphics/Communications*, (February, 1975, Vol. 54, No. 5), p. 23.